

I'm Joe Bezzina, an Operations Manager at Gulfstream Aerospace in Westfield Massachusetts.

I've been employed by Gulfstream for almost 20 years and feel fortunate to have been involved in the aviation industry for over 25 years.

I am a Connecticut resident and a member of CT Aero Tech's Trade Technology Advisory Committee.

Like many aviation professionals, the aviation industry has been good to me. It has provided me a safe, rewarding, well-paying career that has allowed me to buy a home, raise a family and contribute to the local economy.

As a Connecticut resident, I am discouraged when I hear in the news about people and businesses leaving the state. If we wish to attract businesses to the state having an airport within the Hartford city limits adds infrastructure which enables businesses to efficiently commute into and out of Hartford with business aircraft. Many of the most attractive cities to conduct business in have airports in close proximity to the center of the city.

Having schools like CT Aero Tech, which offer the training required for people to become certified Airframe and Power Plant technicians, provides others like me the opportunity to become highly skilled, self-sufficient residents of the state of Connecticut.

Having CT Aero Tech in Hartford allows businesses such as Gulfstream and the Connecticut based operations of Pratt & Whitney, Bombardier, Embraer and Sikorsky, along with the many other smaller aerospace businesses in the state, to provide guidance to the school, which in turn further develops the necessary public/private industry collaboration that is mandatory if we expect both area businesses and the local economy to grow and prosper.

Currently in Connecticut we are fortunate to live in an area where there is a high concentration of aviation jobs which rely on a steady supply of trained technicians for an industry which is expanding. At Gulfstream we offer competitive wages. In fact, the current positions at the facility that require hands on technical skills or those that now manage technical skillsets represent 80% of our total employee population and carry an average annual salary of \$75,000 ----- without including overtime or benefits.

There is no better time to be a graduating aircraft technician. Our industry is facing a decline in the number of qualified technicians to fill both current and future positions; that will in part replace an aging industry workforce. In our company alone, we have increased our head count from 131 employees to 247 employees in the last three years. We currently are looking to hire another 20-30 technicians in 2016. This is just Gulfstream. Eight to 10 years ago when we posted for a position we would have dozens of people apply, now we are lucky we get 2-3 applicants per position.

When I speak to my counterparts in other aerospace companies in Connecticut they are faced with the same situation. Nobody can predict the future, but businesses tend to grow where a qualified pool of candidates is available. The more technicians the school can train and place with local aerospace and non-aerospace businesses alike, the more likely they will remain as Connecticut residents, contributing to our states growth. I understand our state is faced with some tough financial choices, but **NOT** continuing the operation of CT Aero Tech would be a short sighted decision. Connecticut is located in the center of the busiest aviation corridor in the world. If Connecticut cannot offer the necessary

personal resources for this growing industry, what does that say about the future growth of Connecticut based businesses focused on aviation?

I encourage our state legislatures to visit Gulfstream Aerospace to learn more about the highly skilled, well compensated employees that our industry requires and affords. Thank you for your time and consideration of this most important decision on the future of CT Aero Tech and Brainard Airport and the place aviation will take in the state of Connecticut's future.

Joseph Bezzina

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Distance Airports are from Centers of Cities

	Airport	City Center	Distance in Miles
>>>>>>>	Brainard	Hartford	3
	Bradley Int'l	Hartford	16.4
	T.F. Green	Providence	8.5
	Logan	Boston	3.9
	Pease Airport	Portsmouth	4.4
	Hartsfield Int'l	Atlanta	11
10 Best U.S. Cities for Business All but ONE are less than 15 miles to City Center	NE Philly	Philadephia	14.3
	Seattle- Tacoma	Seattle	14.4
	Love Field	Dallas	10.1
	William Hobby	Houston	12.2
	Burbank Airport	Los Angeles	16.2
	San Francisco Int'l	San Francisco	13.8
	Logan	Boston	3.9
	Midway	Chicago	10.8
	Reagan	Washington	5.2
	Teterboro	NewYork	13.2

****** Note highest concentration of aircraft in the world is in the northeast of the U.S.**